

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a "letter", written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 294.*

Bha seanfhacal ann san t-seann aimsir – *Tha a thapadh air teanga an Èireannaich, ach 's ann an dèidh làimh a tha an Gàidheal glic.* Dè ur beachdan? 'S dòcha gu bheil tomhas dhen fhìrinn ann fhathast... Tha a thapadh air teanga an Èireannaich, ach 's ann an dèidh làimh a tha an Gàidheal glic.

Co-dhiù, dh'fhaodadh tu ràdh 's dòcha gu robh e fìor ann an co-cheangal ri tachartas ann an seachd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a còig (1745) nuair a bha Teàrlach Òg Stiùbhart agus arm ann an Derby. 'S ann an uair sin a fhuair am Prionnsa is a Chomhairle-chogaidh fiosrachadh bho Èireannach a nochd nam measg. B' esan Dudley Bradstreet agus bha tapadh air a theanga, ceart gu leòr. Bha e na fhear-brathaidh don riaghaltas ann an Lunnainn.

Thug e tastan don a h-uile saighdear Seumasach ris an do thachair e air an rathad eadar Lichfield agus Derby. Carson? Uill, gu sìmplidh, bha e an dòchas gun cosgadh na saighdearan an t-airgead air deoch làidir is gum biodh iad an uair sin gun chomas sabaid. Faisg air Derby, thilg e air falbh a h-uile rud a dh'innseadh do na Seumasach gu robh e taiceil don riaghaltas, agus rinn e air campa a' Phrionnsa. Bha e a' coimhead cho spaideil anns an deise ùr aige, 's gu robh na Seumasaich dhen bheachd gur e morair Sasannach a bh' ann. Chaidh a leigeil a-steach don taigh far an robh am Prionnsa agus a Chomhairle-chogaidh a' deasbad. Bha Bradstreet deiseil airson am mealladh gu dubh.

Cha b' e sin a' chiad choinneamh a bh' air a bhith aig a' Chomhairle air an là sin. Na bu tràithe bha am Morair Seòras Moireach air a ràdh gum bu chòir dhaibh tilleadh a dh'Alba. Thuir Moireach gu robh trì feachdan mòra nan aghaidh le trithead mìle saighdear annta uile gu lèir. Bha sin an coimeas ris a' chòig mìle a bh' aig na Seumasaich. Bha am Prionnsa, ge-tà, airson cumail a dol a Lunnainn – nach robh ach ceud is fichead mìle air falbh.

Bha cùisean a' dol an aghaidh a' Phrionnsa. Agus nuair a chaidh iarraidh air Bradstreet nochdadh air am beulaibh, chuir esan tarrag a bharrachd sa chiste. Thuir e gu robh Cumberland a' feitheamh le arm ann an Lichfield. Bha esan a' dol a dhol air cùl nan Seumasach gus nach fhaigheadh iad cothrom teicheadh gu tuath. Bha an t-arm aig Richmond a' dol a thoirt ionnsaigh orra nuair a bha iad air an rathad. Agus thug Bradstreet rabhadh seachad gu robh arm de dh'ochd no naoi mìle saighdear ann an Northampton, eadar Derby agus Lunnainn. 'S e breug a bh' aige – cha robh càil de sheòrsa ann.

Bha Bradstreet dhen bheachd gun cuireadh na Seumasaich feadhainn gu ruige Northampton airson faighinn a-mach an e an fhìrinn a bh' aige. Cuimhnicheamaid gur e a bha fa-near dha ach dàil dusan uair a thìde a chur air na Seumasaich. Aig a' cheann thall, 's e barrachd na sin a bh' ann, oir cho-dhùin a' Chomhairle-chogaidh tilleadh a dh'Alba.

Bha Bradstreet dhen bheachd gun tug esan buaidh air gnothaichean agus tha e coltach gu robh Teàrlach Òg dhen aon bheachd. Dh'òrdaich am Prionnsa am fear eile a chumail an grèim. 'S mar sin, tràth sa mhadainn air an t-siathamh là dhen Dùbhlachd,

thòisich Bradstreet air an rathad a dh'ionnsaigh Alba an cois arm nan Seumasach. Cuin a dh'fhàsadh na Gàidheil Albannach glic mun bhrathadh aige? An dèidh làimh? Chì sinn an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdain: Comhairle-chogaidh: *Council of War*; deoch-làidir: *alcoholic drink*; spaideil: *smart*; morair: *lord*; Moireach: *Murray*.

Abairtean na seachdain: gu robh e fìor ann an co-cheangal ri tachartas: *that it was true in connection with an incident*; bha e na fhear-brathaidh don riaghaltas: *he was a spy for the government*; thug e tastan don a h-uile saighdear Seumasach: *he gave every Jacobite soldier a shilling*; gum biodh iad an uair sin gun chomas sabaid: *that they would then be unable to fight*; rinn e air campa a' Phrionnsa: *he made for the Prince's camp*; bha X deiseil airson am mealladh gu dubh: *X was ready to utterly deceive them*; a bh' air a bhith aig a' Chomhairle air an là sin: *which the Council had held on that day*; na bu tràithe: *earlier*; le trithead mìle saighdear annta: *with thirty thousand soldiers in them*; a' dèanamh deiseil airson teicheadh: *preparing to flee*; nuair a chaidh iarraidh air X nochdadh air am beulaibh: *when X was asked to appear in front of them*; tarrag a bharrachd sa chiste: *another nail in the coffin*; bha esan a' dol a dhol air cùl nan Seumasach: *he was going to go behind the Jacobites*; cha robh càil de sheòrsa ann: *there was nothing of the sort there*; airson faighinn a-mach an e an fhìrinn a bh' aige: *to find out if he was telling the truth*; cuimhnicheamaid gur e a bha fa-near dha ach dàil dusan uair a thìde a chur air X: *let us remember that his intention was to delay X by twelve hours*; aig a' cheann thall: *in the end*; gun tug esan buaidh air gnothaichean: *that he influenced matters*; dàil dusan uair a thìde a chur orra: *delay them for twelve hours*; cuin a dh'fhàsadh na Gàidheil Albannach glic mun bhrathadh aige?: *when would the Scottish Gaels grow wise about his spying/treachery?*

Puing-chànain na seachdain: nuair a bha Teàrlach Òg Stiùbhart agus arm ann an Derby: *when Bonnie Prince Charlie and his army were in Derby*. This point harks back to my comments in Litir 82 regarding the “disappearance” of the third person singular masculine possessive article (a) when the following noun (the one being possessed) starts with a vowel. Theoretically the above sentence could mean “when BPC and an army (not his army) were in Derby”, but it is pretty obvious from the context that such is not the case. In older texts you will see 'arm, with the apostrophe indicating the (hidden) masculine possessive article. But modern orthographic conventions have done away with this as part of a drive to reduce the number of apostrophes in the language.

Seanfhacal na seachdain: Tha a thapadh air teanga an Èireannaich, ach 's ann an dèidh làimh a tha an Gàidheil glic: *the Irishman's cleverness is on [the tip of] his tongue, but it is after the event that the [Scottish] Gael is wise*. I'll leave you to assess whether this proverb was appropriate or if it has currency today – but it is worth remembering which country owns the Blarney Stone!

* Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig